

Monday, July 19, 2010



First family wraps up packed Maine holiday



President Barack Obama, second right, first lady Michelle Obama, left, and their children Sasha and Malia Obama, second left, arrive on the South Lawn of the White House in Washington after a weekend vacation on Mount Desert Island in Maine, Sunday, July 18, 2010.

MARK S. SMITH,
Associated Press Writer

BAR HARBOR, Maine (AP) —

Associated Press

President Barack Obama and the first family said goodbye to Maine on Sunday after an energetic weekend

vacation along the Atlantic coast. The president, first lady Michelle Obama and daughters Malia and Sasha boarded a small military jet serving as Air Force One and took off from the Bar Harbor airport, returning to the White House by midday.

The Obamas spent much of their time hiking and biking in Acadia National Park. They also played tennis, went boating and enjoyed the food in the resort town of Bar Harbor. From the moment they arrived on Friday, it was clear they were determined to make the most of their time, much of it spent in the park.

The Obamas set the tone right away, motorcading straight from the airport to a park bike trail for an hour of cycling. What followed was a whirl of outings, as their motorcade crisscrossed Mount Desert Island. They went boating on Frenchman Bay, hiked on a park nature trail, played tennis, hung out at the pool, toured a lighthouse, had lunch and dinner at harborside restaurants and — of course — stopped for ice cream.

Even their dog Bo had fun, playfully wrapping up a Coast Guard lighthouse

keeper in the leash Sasha, 9, was holding.

But the high point — literally — was their visit to the summit of Cadillac Mountain, listed by park officials as the tallest peak on the Eastern Seaboard. From the granite mountaintop, as they listened to a park superintendent, the Obamas beheld a spectacular vista of granite hills above an emerald bay.

It was certainly a more uplifting scene than what awaited the president on his return to Washington: more wrangling with a bitterly divided Congress heading toward the August recess, with lawmakers' attention increasingly focused on the November elections when control of Congress will be at stake.

The first family has more traveling this summer.

Malia, 12, is headed to summer camp for the first time. Her dad has said he plans to return to the Gulf Coast soon for another look at the oil spill zone. And residents of Martha's Vineyard are wondering if the Obamas will spend part of the month on the island off the Massachusetts' coast, as they did last summer. □





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BP, FED CLASH

Continued from Front Page

Pilloried for nearly three months as it tried repeatedly to stop the leak, BP PLC capped the nearly mile-deep well Thursday and wants to keep it that way. The government's plan, however, is to eventually pipe oil to the surface, which would ease pressure on the fragile well but would require up to three more days of oil spilling into the Gulf.

"No one associated with this whole activity ... wants to see any more oil flow into the Gulf of Mexico," Doug Suttles, BP's chief operating officer, said Sunday. "Right now we don't have a target to return the well to flow."

An administration official familiar with the spill oversight, however, told The Associated Press that a seep and possible methane were found near the busted oil well. The official spoke on condition of anonymity Sunday because an announcement about the next steps had not been made yet. The concern all along — since pressure readings on the cap weren't as high as expected — was a leak elsewhere in the wellbore, meaning the cap may have to be reopened to prevent the environmental disaster from becoming even worse and harder to fix.

The official, who would not clarify what is seeping near the well, also said BP is not complying with the government's demand for more monitoring. When asked about the official's comments, BP spokesman Mark Salt would only say that "we continue to work very closely with all government scientists on this."

Retired Coast Guard Adm. Thad Allen, the Obama administration's spill response chief, insisted Sunday that "nothing has changed" since Saturday, when he said oil

would eventually be piped to surface ships. The government is overseeing BP's work to stop the leak, which ultimately is to be plugged using a relief well.

Allen decided to extend testing of the cap that had been scheduled to end Sunday, the official who spoke on condition of anonymity said. That means the oil will stay in the well for now as scientists continue run tests and monitor pressure readings. The official didn't say how long that would take.

Officials at the Department of Homeland Security referred questions to a statement issued by Allen; neither he nor BP officials could explain the apparent contradiction in plans.

Suttles' comments carved out an important piece of turf for BP: If Allen sticks with the containment plan and oil again pours forth into the Gulf, even briefly, it will be the government's doing, not BP's.

The company very much wants to avoid a repeat of the live underwater video that showed millions of gallons of oil spewing from the blown well for weeks.

"I can see why they're pushing for keeping the cap on and shut in until the relief well is in place," said Daniel Keeney, president of a Dallas-based public relations firm.

The government wants to eliminate any chance of making matters worse, while BP is loath to lose the momentum it gained the moment it finally halted the leak, Keeney said.

"They want to project being on the same team, but they have different end results that benefit each," he said.

Oil would have to be released under Allen's plan, which would ease concerns that the capped reservoir might force its way out through another

National Incident Commander Ret. Coast Guard Adm. Thad Allen answers a question during a news conference about ongoing response efforts to the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill Tuesday, July 13, 2010 in Houston.

Associated Press

route. Those concerns stem from pressure readings in the cap that have been lower than expected.

Scientists still aren't sure whether the pressure readings mean a leak elsewhere in the well bore, possibly deep down in bedrock, which could make the seabed unstable. Oil would have to be released into the water to relieve pressure and allow crews to hook up the ships, BP and Allen have said. So far, there have been no signs of a leak.

"We're not seeing any problems at this point with the shut-in," Suttles said at a Sunday morning briefing.

Allen said later Sunday that scientists and engineers would continue to evaluate and monitor the cap through acoustic, sonar and seismic readings.

They're looking to determine whether low pressure readings mean that more oil than expected poured into the Gulf of Mexico since the BP-leased Deepwater Horizon rig exploded April 20, killing 11 people and touching off one of America's worst environment crises.

"While we are pleased that no oil is currently being released into the Gulf of Mexico and want to take all appropriate action to keep it that way, it is important that all decisions are driven by the science," Allen said in a news release.

"Ultimately, we must ensure no irreversible damage is done which could cause uncontrolled leakage from numerous points on the sea floor." □



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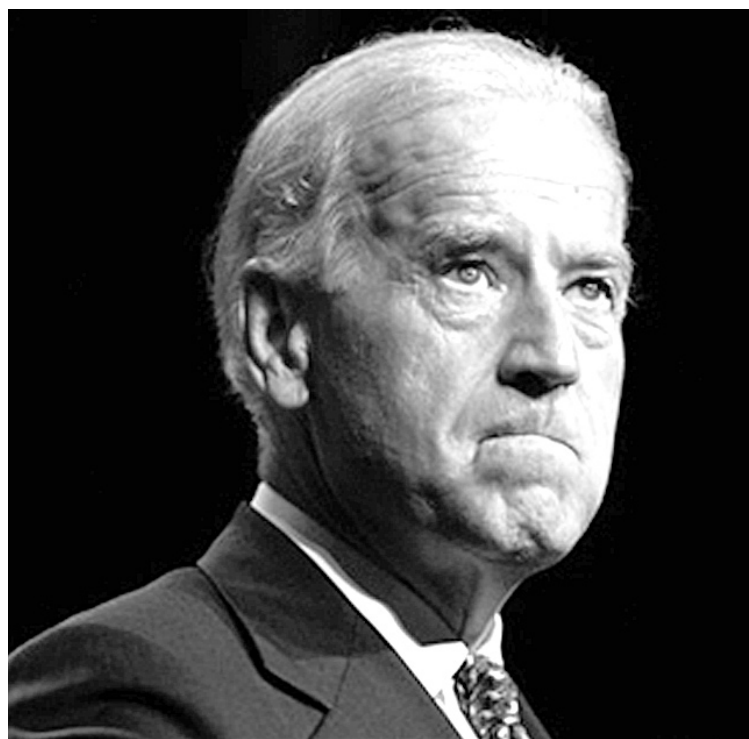
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Both Reps and Dems predict victory in November



Vice President Joe Biden speaks at the annual Tennessee Democratic Party Jackson Day on Friday, July 16, 2010 in Nashville, Tenn.

Associated Press

DOUGLASS K. DANIEL

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) —

Vice President Joe Biden is assuring House Democrats that he thinks they will keep control after the November elections. Only a week ago, President Barack Obama's press secretary infuriated members of his own party by suggesting that voters could put Republicans in power.

"I don't think the losses are going to be bad at all. I think we're going to shock the heck out of everybody," Biden told ABC television's "This Week."

That cheery prediction contrasted with the dour but realistic appraisal last

weekend by White House spokesman Robert Gibbs, whose quick backtrack that he didn't think the Republicans would get a majority didn't ease the criticism that flew his way. By Sunday the Democrats appearing on the news shows had rallied around the idea that the rift Gibbs exposed between the White House and its congressional allies was no big deal.

"There is always tension between the White House and the House and the Senate," said House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer. "My view is, the president and Democrats in the House and Democrats in the Senate have the same objective."

Republicans face a high wall to achieve the net gain of 40 or so seats needed to take back the 435-member House. In the Senate, the Democrats' 57-41 majority — they also have the support of two independents — appears to be tougher. All House seats and at least 36 Senate seats are up for election in November.

Here's how congressional leaders and those chairing campaign committees scored their chances for control of Congress: —Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell: "I'd like

to be in better shape than the 41 that we have now. And I think the chances of that are pretty good."

—Hoyer: "I don't think we're talking about a big loss."

—Sen. John Cornyn, chairman of the National Republican Senatorial Committee: "If the election were held today, it would be a pretty good election."

—Sen. Robert Menendez, chairman of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee: "Democrats in the Senate will be a majority."

—Rep. Pete Sessions, chairman of the National Republican Congressional Committee: "I think our candidates are going to take us from good to great to victory. And I think Republicans can win in November."

—Rep. Chris Van Hollen, the head of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee: "I think these guys are popping the champagne bottles already over there. But the fact of the matter is, the Democrats will retain a majority in the House. We know that it's going to be a tough election." Menendez, Van Hollen and Sessions appeared on NBC's "Meet the Press." McConnell and Hoyer spoke on CNN's "State of the Union." □

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Argument led to deadly Wash. state park shooting

By TIM BOOTH,
Associated Press

SEATTLE – A shooting at a state park near Seattle that left two dead and four wounded stemmed from an argument between two groups, one of which was celebrating a birthday party, investigators said Sunday.

King County Sheriff's Sgt. John Urquhart said killed in the shooting Saturday night at Lake Sammamish State Park were one man from each group: a 33-year-old from Kent, Wash., and a 30-year-old from Seattle.

The park is about 20 miles east of downtown Seattle.

One of the dead men was found with a gun on his body, while the other was not found with a weapon, Urquhart said. Their names were not released.

The violence erupted around 9 p.m. at the edge of the lake between the two groups, who were about 50 to 75 yards apart. Urquhart said investigators are still determining what the groups were arguing about and what caused the dispute to escalate into gunfire.

Six people were taken into custody, but so far no one has been booked into jail, Urquhart said Sunday.

The park, a popular gathering place for boating and watersports near the upscale suburbs of Bellevue and Issaquah, was closed Sunday while the investigation continued.

Urquhart said investigators at the scene have recovered four guns and at least 20 spent shell casing.

A park ranger alerted authorities to the shooting, placing an emergency call around 9 p.m. More shots were fired during the call. As police flooded the scene, they found parkgoers hiding in park buildings to get away from the gunfire.

Swedish Medical Center spokesman Ed Boyle told The Seattle Times that a 29-year-old man with gunshot injuries was treated at the hospital's emergency facility in Issaquah before being transferred to Harborview Medical Center in Seattle.

Urquhart said two other

wounded men were also taken to Harborview, while the fourth was taken to Overlake Medical Center in Bellevue. A Harborview spokesman told The Times early Sunday that one man was in serious condition and the other two were in satisfactory condition. The names of the injured were not released.

Dawn Hilliker said she and her two teenage sons spent the day at Lake Sammamish State Park celebrating a friend's high school graduation. They were packing up their car to leave when they heard several loud bangs from 250 yards away.

"I thought some kids were setting off firecrackers, but 30 seconds later, I saw three cops driving down the street," her son, Austin Hilliker, told The Times. "I saw three people arrested, two of them no more than 20 feet from our car. It was super scary."

The family waited two hours to leave the park, as police stopped every vehicle on the way out, Dawn Hilliker said.

Strong aftershocks shake Alaska island region

ANCHORAGE, Alaska – A series of strong aftershocks in Alaska's Aleutian Islands region Sunday followed a powerful earthquake that shook the remote area, but officials said there were no immediate reports of damage or injury.

There also was no threat of a tsunami from any of the quakes.

The U.S. Geological Survey said the initial 6.7-magnitude temblor struck at 9:56 p.m. Saturday and was centered in the Bering Sea about 155 miles southwest of Dutch Harbor. The quake hit about 21 miles beneath the seabed.

USGS geophysicist Rafael Abreu said there were at least 11 aftershocks, including one

occurring at 11:48 a.m. Sunday that had a 5.8 preliminary magnitude. He said that magnitude was still under review and could change.

The West Coast and Alaska Tsunami Warning Center showed a 6.2 magnitude for the same aftershock, which was felt in the tiny community of Nikolski, about 115 miles southwest of Dutch Harbor.

The initial, 6.7-magnitude earthquake was felt in both Dutch Harbor and nearby Unalaska, the nearest communities of any size to the epicenter.

Police in Unalaska, situated just across a bay from Dutch Harbor, said they had no reports of damage or injury.



Police officers block off the area around Sammamish State Park on Sammamish Lake late Saturday July 17, 2010 looking for a gunman involved in a shooting at the park. The State Patrol says two people are dead and five others wounded in the shooting at the state park north of Seattle.

Associated Press



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Clinton seeks more Pakistan-Afghan cooperation

MATTHEW LEE,

Associated Press Writer

ISLAMABAD (AP) —

Pakistan and Afghanistan sealed a landmark trade deal Sunday as U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton pushed the two neighbors to step up civilian cooperation and work together against al-Qaida and the Taliban.

Shortly after kicking off a South Asia trip aimed at refining the goals of the increasingly unpopular war in Afghanistan, Clinton looked on as the Afghan and Pakistani commerce ministers signed the trade agreement. It was reached only after years of negotiation with recent and very active U.S. encouragement.

The pact, which eases restrictions on cross-border transportation, must be ratified by the Afghan parliament and Pakistani Cabinet. U.S. officials said they believe it will significantly enhance ties between the two countries, boost development and incomes on both sides of the border and contribute to the fight against extremists.

“Bringing Islamabad and Kabul together has been a goal of this administration from the beginning,” said Richard Holbrooke, the U.S. special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan. “This is a vivid demonstration of the two countries coming closer together.”

Despite the agreement, Clinton faces challenges in appealing for greater cooperation between the neighboring nations on the nearly 9-year-old war,

pressing Pakistan for more help in taking on militants accused of plotting attacks on the U.S., including the failed Times Square bombing, and stepping up action against extremists along the Afghan border.

Although Pakistan has relented on issuing long-delayed visas for some 450 U.S. officials and Clinton is bringing new U.S. development aid for Pakistan, anti-American sentiment remains high.

In addition, U.S. officials have also expressed concerns about Pakistan’s plans for a deal with China that would give energy-starved Pakistan two new nuclear power plants. Critics said transferring the reactors would violate international nonproliferation agreements. In talks with President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani, ahead of Monday meetings with military and civilian officials, Clinton was conveying the message that the U.S. is committed to the country’s long-term development needs, not just short-term security gains.

Clinton is offering a package of about \$500 million in development programs, funded by legislation approved by Congress to triple nonmilitary aid to \$1.5 billion a year over five years. The aid will focus on water, energy, agriculture and health. The initiatives mark the second phase of projects begun under a new and enhanced strategic partnership.

Holbrooke noted that when Clinton visited Pakistan last



Afghanistan Minister of Trade Anwar-ul-Haq Ahady, left, and Pakistani Minister of Trade Makhdoom Amin Fahi shake hands as U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Pakistani Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani, right, applaud after the signing of a trade treaty between Pakistan and Afghanistan Sunday, July 18, 2010, in Islamabad, Pakistan.

October she had “waded into continually hostile and skeptical crowds.” But he maintained that the new U.S. focus is “producing a change in Pakistani attitudes, first within the government and gradually, more slowly, within the public.”

Still, he and other officials acknowledge, mistrust of America runs deep in Pakistan, particularly over unmanned drone strikes. They’re aimed at militants but often kill or injure civilians; to many Pakistanis, they represent an unacceptable violation of sovereignty.

Vali Nasr, a Holbrooke deputy, said overcoming the suspicion remains a work in progress.

“We’re beginning to see movement, but this is not going to happen overnight,” he told reporters aboard

Clinton’s plane. “We’re not going to be able to get them aligned over a one-year time period on every single issue and change 30 years of foreign policy of Pakistan on a dime.”

Underscoring Pakistan’s fragility, only hours after Clinton’s arrival a suicide bomber ran past guards at a minority Shiite mosque in eastern Pakistan then blew himself up, wounding several worshippers. The attack, hundreds of miles away from Islamabad, appeared to be the latest in a string by Sunni extremists against other Muslims they consider infidels.

After her stop in Pakistan, Clinton is set to attend an international conference on Afghanistan on Tuesday in Kabul, where Afghan officials will present details on their plans to reintegrate

militants into society and outline how they intend to implement reform and anti-corruption pledges made earlier this year.

Security was tightened in the Afghan capital ahead of the conference which will assemble diplomats from 60 nations as well as the heads of NATO and the United Nations. Nonetheless, a suicide bomber killed three civilians near a busy market. American lawmakers and voters are increasingly questioning the course of the drawn-out war with rising death tolls among U.S. and international troops and growing questions about corruption. Last month was the deadliest of the war for international forces: 103 coalition troops were killed, despite the addition of tens of thousands more U.S. troops. □

Associated Press

SUICIDE ATTACKS

Continued from Front Page

There were conflicting reports as to how many of the dead were Iraqi soldiers and whether accountants who were killed as they were handing out money were civilian or military.

In the second attack, a suspected militant stormed into a local Awakening Council headquarters in the far western town of Qaim near the Syrian border and opened fire on those inside.

The town and the vast desert province of Anbar, were for years the epicenter of the Sunni Arab insurgency and a sanctuary for al-Qaida.

The fighters returned fire, wounding the attacker, who then blew himself up as they gathered around him, killing three and wounding six others, police officials said on condition of anonymity.

All officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the media.

Two other members of the Sunni militia were also

wounded in other minor attacks south of Baghdad.

While violence has dropped dramatically over the past two years in the country, Iraqi security forces remain a favorite target for insurgents bent on destabilizing the country and its Shiite-led government.

The attack also raised to the surface the festering resentment on the part of some Awakening Council members toward a government they said has largely marginalized them, even though their decision to fight alongside the Americans has made them targets for Sunni extremists.

The complaints take on greater urgency given Iraq's current political stalemate and the scheduled withdrawal of all U.S. combat forces by the end of August.

More than four months after March's inconclusive parliamentary election, Iraq has yet to form a new government as politicians bicker over who will lead the country. The impasse has raised fears that

militants will try to exploit the political vacuum to re-ignite sectarian tensions that brought Iraq to the brink of civil war in 2006 and 2007.

While the Awakening Councils played a key role in reducing the overall level of violence in Iraq, their future role in the Shiite-dominated government is uncertain.

The U.S. used to pay the monthly salaries of about \$300 to the nearly 100,000-strong militias. Last year, the Iraqi government took over paying their salaries and, after heavy pressure from the Americans, agreed to absorb up to 20 percent of the fighters into its security forces, while giving the others government jobs.

"The government has not provided job opportunities to the heroes who fought al-Qaida," Sheik Efan Saadoun, a member of the provincial council in Anbar said. "Therefore, these heroes are not willing to fight al-Qaida because they have not received what they deserved."

Others appeared to imply



An injured man is carried on stretcher outside a hospital in Mahmoudiya, Iraq, Sunday, July 18, 2010. Twin suicide bombings killed scores of people on Sunday, including dozens from a government-backed, anti-al-Qaida militia lining up to collect their paychecks near a military base southwest of Baghdad, Iraqi officials said.

Associated Press

that the government was at least complicit in the attacks Sunday.

Khamis, the bombing victim, said while men are usually searched at the checkpoint where the bomber struck, on Sunday they were allowed to line up without any checks.

Hassan Ali, who was waiting at the hospital with his wounded

nephew, said also this was the fifth day they had gone to the base to try and collect their paychecks.

"Every time they went to receive their salary, they told them to come the next day and they did that for four days and now in the fifth day this explosion took place," he said □




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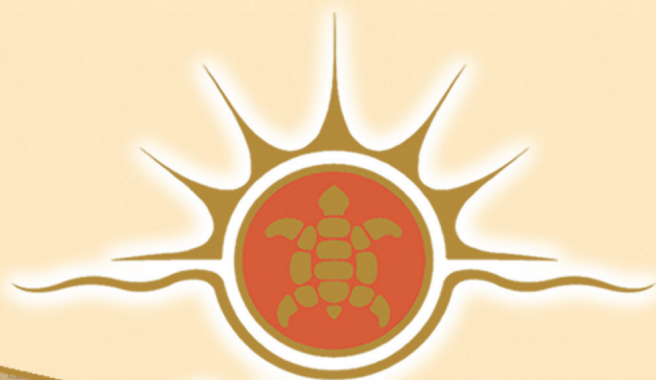
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Puerto Rico on alert after drug fugitive's arrest

DAVID McFADDEN,
Associated Press Writer

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — With the Caribbean's biggest reputed drug lord back behind bars, law enforcement authorities in the region are on alert for potential bloody feuds among rivals and lieutenants trying to take his place.

The Saturday capture of Jose Figueroa Agosto in Puerto Rico's capital after a decade-long hunt was a big break, but it also means that members of his violent group may try to wrest control of his share of the illegal trade, said Javier F. Pena, special agent in charge of the Caribbean division of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration.

"This guy was truly the leader of his organization," Pena told The Associated Press on Sunday. "And anytime the top guy is taken down, his people can start to fight one another to assume control."

There is always concern that people will be jockeying for position, so it's a matter of time to see if there will be bloodshed."

Authorities have painted

Figueroa as the Caribbean's version of Pablo Escobar, the late notorious Colombian drug kingpin of the 1980s.

For 10 years, the 45-year-old Puerto Rican fed his underworld mystique by pulling off narrow escapes and taunting police in the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico, a U.S. territory that is attractive to traffickers as America's southernmost border.

But his luck finally ran out this weekend, when Figueroa was caught while driving through a working-class Dominican neighborhood of San Juan. When he realized he was being followed, he tried to run on foot but U.S. Marshals, FBI and DEA agents, and Puerto Rican police captured him. He was wearing a wig as a disguise.

Gov. Luis Fortuno told a news conference Sunday that he phoned Dominican President Leonel Fernandez to discuss the arrest and reiterate the importance of future security collaborations between the two Spanish-speaking governments.

Police chief Jose Figueroa Sancha told the same news conference that the reputed kingpin's arrest "not only represents a gain for island and federal authorities ... it is an international gain."

"We have arrested one of the major drug traffickers in history."

Though no one can say exactly how much cocaine Figueroa allegedly moved, the scale of his reputed empire emerged following a botched September raid in the Dominican Republic, which netted several cars, including an armored Mercedes Benz with \$4.6 million in cash inside, and a laptop computer full of evidence. Dominican authorities also confiscated a ranch with a small zoo — along with at least nine vehicles, including two Ferraris.

"He's got properties, boats, cars, jewelry and cash out there," Pena said.

For years, he "hid" in the open in the Dominican Republic, building ties with upper-crust Dominicans who appear regularly in society magazines. Since the September raid,



Jose Figueroa Agosto is escorted handcuffed by DEA agents after his arrest in San Juan, Saturday July 17, 2010. Federal authorities arrested fugitive alleged drug kingpin Jose Figueroa Agosto Saturday after a decade-long chase through the Caribbean.

Associated Press

several people have been jailed on charges that they laundered money or otherwise aided Figueroa.

Investigators are concerned that his conspirators have included police and other officials.

Figueroa reputedly funneled Colombian drugs to the U.S. mainland through Puerto Rico, where he walked out of a prison in November 1999 after presenting guards with a forged release order. He had served only four years of a 209-year sentence for killing a man suspected of stealing a cocaine shipment.

Within a month, he moved to the Dominican Republic,

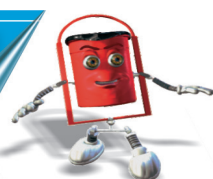
where he was detained as part of a drug investigation in 2001. He was released after two weeks; he used an alias and authorities didn't know his true identity.

He is wanted in the Dominican Republic on kidnapping, money-laundering, drug-trafficking and murder charges.

U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder had personally pledged full cooperation to capture the fugitive, who was wanted on a U.S. Marshals warrant for his prison escape and for filing a false passport application. He also was the target of a U.S. task force focusing on major drug suppliers to the U.S. □

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Netanyahu says he will oppose conversion bill

ARON HELLER,
Associated Press Writer

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced Sunday that he would oppose a conversion bill that has rekindled the age-old debate over who is a Jew and has provoked an angry response among liberal Jewish groups abroad whose support is critical to Israel.

Last week, an Israeli parliamentary committee gave preliminary approval to a draft legislation that would give Orthodox rabbis in Israel more control over conversions. The more liberal Reform and Conservative movements that represent the vast majority of Jews outside Israel contend the new legislation would be a dangerous blow to religious pluralism.

Netanyahu told his Cabinet on Sunday that he feared the bill would create a rift in the Jewish world and that if he couldn't find a compromise solution, he would ask his coalition partners to vote against it. The bill would have to pass three votes in the Knesset, Israel's parliament, to become law.

Under the current practice, Israel only partially recognizes conversions performed by non-Orthodox rabbis inside Israel, while those converted by non-Orthodox rabbis outside the country are automatically eligible for Israeli citizenship like other Jews.

The proposed legislation would give Israel's chief

rabbinate the legal authority over all matters of conversion in Israel.

The group most likely to suffer from the change would be immigrants who converted to Judaism abroad and could now be denied Israeli citizenship. The bill touches a nerve in the Reform and Conservative movements. Though they are strong abroad, their presence is marginal in Israel, where Orthodox rabbis have a near monopoly over religious practice.

While staunch backers of Israel, liberal Jewish movements abroad look worriedly at the prospect of the country's Orthodox religious establishment further entrenching its control. They say passage of the bill would also be a blow to the legitimacy of non-Orthodox rabbis the world over.

Rabbi David Saperstein, head of the Washington-based Religious Action Center of the Union of Reform Judaism, said the bill, if passed, would mark a "crisis of the first order."

"It would be an enormous blow to the unity of the Jewish people and the principle of religious freedom in Israel," said Saperstein, who is visiting the country to lobby lawmakers to drop the bill.

"The American Jewish community will remain strongly engaged in Israel, but the message will be sent that the government of Israel does not accept our rabbis and our movement as legitimate, and

it would make all our work much more difficult."

Of the world's roughly 13 million Jews, half live in Israel and most of the rest are concentrated in North America.

Israeli religious authorities' skepticism about the legitimacy of overseas conversions has been cited as one of the main causes of a growing rift between Israel and world Jewry.

Seth Farber, an Orthodox rabbi and director of a body that helps Israelis navigate the rabbinical bureaucracy, said he was in favor of conversion reform but not at the price of damaging the delicate relations between Israel and the world Jewish community.

"We have to find a way to resolve this problem without paying too heavy a price, which is alienating 85 percent of American Jews," he said.

The bill has even provoked a group of Jewish U.S. senators to draft a rare letter of complaint to Israel's ambassador to Washington, The Jerusalem Post newspaper reported.

Caley Gray, communications director for signatory Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-New Jersey), told the Jerusalem Post that "Senator Lautenberg hopes the Knesset does not pass this legislation, which he views as divisive."

The bill's sponsor, David Rotem, an Orthodox Jewish lawmaker from the largely secular Yisrael Beitenu party,



Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu arrives at the weekly cabinet meeting in Jerusalem, Sunday, July 18, 2010.

Associated Press

has rejected the criticism, not affect North American Jews.

Roughly 1 million people immigrated to Israel after the collapse of the Soviet Union, who make up most of his party's voters. Rotem insists the bill would

Judaism. □



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'Inception' earns dreamy reception with \$60.4M



FILE - In this film publicity file photo provided by Warner Bros., Leonardo DiCaprio is shown in a scene from 'Inception.' Leonardo DiCaprio and Christopher Nolan's 'Inception' is anything but a sleeper as the thriller opened big with \$60.4 million and a No. 1 finish at the weekend box office, according to studio estimates Sunday, July 18, 2010.

(AP Photo/Warner Bros., Melissa Moseley, File)

By DAVID GERMAIN,
AP Movie Writer

LOS ANGELES — Leonardo DiCaprio and Christopher Nolan's "Inception" is anything but a sleeper as the thriller opened big with \$60.4 million and a No. 1 finish at the weekend box office, according to studio estimates

Sunday.

The Warner Bros. action tale about a team that sneaks into people's dreams is DiCaprio's biggest opening weekend, topping his previous best of \$41.1 million for last winter's "Shutter Island."

"Inception" falls far short of director Christopher Nolan's

best, though. Nolan is the man who directed the Batman blockbuster "The Dark Knight," which opened over the same weekend two years ago with a record \$158.4 million.

Warner Bros. has carved out a niche with this particular mid-July weekend. The studio followed "The Dark Knight" with a \$77.8 million opening for "Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince" over the same weekend last year.

"We like this spot. Not to sound superstitious, but stay away from this weekend. I own it," said Dan Fellman, head of distribution for Warner Bros.

The final "Harry Potter" movie debuts on the same weekend next summer. Warner plans to open Nolan's third "Batman" movie over that weekend two years from now, though Fellman said the studio could move it to an earlier date that summer. Strong reviews helped "Inception," which stars DiCaprio as leader of a team that normally breaks into people's dreams to steal their secrets but now has been hired to do the opposite — plant an idea in a wealthy heir's subconscious.

Slipping to second place with \$32.7 million was the previous weekend's No. 1 movie, Steve Carell's animated hit "Despicable Me." The Universal release raised its 10-day total to \$118.4 million. Disney's family adventure "The Sorcerer's Apprentice" was a dud, opening at No. 3 with \$17.4 million, lifting its total to \$24.5 million since premiering Wednesday.

"It's disappointing to say the least," said Chuck Viane, head of distribution for Disney, which had high hopes for the movie. "I'm perplexed. I have no response, because I honestly don't know what went wrong."

The movie reunites the team behind the hit "National Treasure" movies — Nicolas Cage, producer Jerry Bruckheimer and director Jon Turteltaub — for an action comedy about an ancient wizard training an awkward apprentice (Jay Baruchel) to take down an evil sorceress in modern Manhattan.

Bruckheimer has been a blockbuster producer for Disney with such hits as "The Rock," "Armageddon" and the "Pirates of the Caribbean" franchise.

But "The Sorcerer's Apprentice" was the summer's second Disney-Bruckheimer production to come up short at the domestic box office, following "Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time," which was unable to crack the \$100 million mark.

"Jerry's working on 'Pirates 4' as we speak," Viane said of the Johnny Depp sequel due out next summer. "I'll go to bat with Jerry any day, because his track record is pretty darn good."

With "Inception" and "Despicable Me," the weekend marked a rare instance when two original stories — not sequels, spinoffs or adaptations of comic books, best-sellers or other properties — led the box office.

Hollywood relies on familiar titles such as "Iron Man 2," "The Twilight Saga: Eclipse" and "Toy Story 3" for most of its big summer releases, though the occasional fresh idea manages to score with audiences.

"We let all of the sequels and popcorn films come out and get the summer rolling, then we come in here with this original concept," Fellman said of "Inception." "We're in a good place to run now for the rest of the summer."

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Hollywood.com. Final figures will be released Monday.

1. "Inception," \$60.4 million.
2. "Despicable Me," \$32.7 million.
3. "The Sorcerer's Apprentice," \$17.4 million.
4. "The Twilight Saga: Eclipse," \$13.5 million.
5. "Toy Story 3," \$11.7 million.
6. "Grown Ups," \$10 million.
7. "The Last Airbender," \$7.5 million.
8. "Predators," \$6.8 million.
9. "Knight and Day," \$3.7 million.
10. "The Karate Kid," \$2.2 million. □



FILE - In this May 26, 2010 file photo, television personality Paris Hilton arrives at the USO's 'Songs For Soldiers' initiative' event in New York.

(AP Photo/Evan Agostini, File)

Report: Paris Hilton caught with marijuana

PARIS — Paris Hilton was briefly detained in Corsica after sniffer dogs detected a "quite small" quantity of marijuana in her bag, a French newspaper reported Saturday.

Corse Matin newspaper said officers at the airport in Figari found about one gram's worth of marijuana. Hilton, who was transiting the French Mediterranean island in a private jet on Friday, was hauled in for questioning and released about 30 minutes later, the report said.

In a story posted on its Web site, the newspaper said Hilton was traveling along with "personalities close to power in Malaysia" from the French capital to Porto Cervo, in Sardinia. In a posting on the TwitLonger site Saturday, Hilton wrote, "Just to put an end to these rumors. The stories saying I have been arrested are completely false!"

"I am having the best vacation of my life," the posting said.

Earlier this month, Hilton was arrested after the Brazil-Netherlands World Cup match in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, on suspicion of possession of marijuana. The case was then dropped at a midnight court hearing.

Hilton pleaded no contest in 2007 to alcohol-related reckless driving and was sentenced to 45 days in jail. After spending about 23 days in jail, Hilton told U.S. television host Larry King that the experience caused her to re-evaluate the role partying played in her life. She said she wanted "to help raise money for kids and for breast cancer and multiple sclerosis." □

Auctioneer: Daughter will get Lucille Ball awards

LOS ANGELES — An auction house selling Lucille Ball memorabilia says it is returning the actress' lifetime achievement awards to her daughter.

Heritage Auction Galleries says a deal reached Saturday will return the awards to Lucie Arnaz Luckinbill, Ball's daughter with first husband Desi Arnaz.

A sale of dozens of other Ball-related memorabilia will happen Saturday. Items up for bid include a Rolls Royce and love letters to second husband Gary Morton.

The deal announced Saturday ends a legal fight between Luckinbill and Susie Morton, who married Gary Morton after Ball's death in 1989.

A judge agreed to stop the



FILE - In this Nov. 20, 1961 file photo, Gary Morton, left, and Lucille Ball pose after their wedding at the Marble Collegiate Church in New York.

(AP Photo, file)

auction Friday but imposed a high bond Luckinbill couldn't meet.

She has said the awards will be displayed in a museum honoring her mother. □





Gloomy investors ignore plump profits, dump stocks



Traders on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. After a rough start to earnings season, US stocks face a tidal wave of corporate results next week amid growing worries the US economic recovery is slowing.

(AFP/File/Don Emmert)

By **BERNARD CONDON**,
AP Business Writer
NEW YORK — Profit is so boring.

That's one way to characterize investors' suddenly blase view of Corporate America's single most important figure. Earnings gushed last week like oil from the ruptured BP well and were greeted like the same gooey mess. Steel giant Alcoa Inc. blew past expectations, followed by chipmaker Intel Corp.'s best showing in a decade and JPMorgan Chase & Co.'s 76 percent rise.

By week's end stocks of all three had lost earlier gains. On Friday, all major market indices fell more than 2.5 percent. One possible reason for the curious market behavior: We're all focused on the big picture now, and things are looking ugly.

Last week brought a flurry of news suggesting the recovery may be stalling. The Federal Reserve lowered its estimate for economic growth. That was followed by a pair of disappointing regional manufacturing surveys. Then came the coup de grace: a

University of Michigan report Friday showing consumer confidence had fallen.

The selling was indiscriminate and frustrating to bulls.

"You find a company that you think is great, but if the market is going down, it's going down, too," said Linda Duessel, an equity market strategist at Federated Investors. Instead of buying and selling on each company's merits, "We're all macroeconomic economists now." Or as the title of a UBS report Friday put it, "Profits get no respect."

As of midday Friday, 27 out of the 38 S&P 500 companies that have reported earnings — or 7 out of 10 — have beat estimates, according to Thomson Reuters.

Jeffrey Kleintop, chief market strategist of LPL Financial, said he isn't surprised by investors' seeming indifference.

He recently looked back at stock performance a year into every recovery since World War II. He found consumer confidence fell and investors suddenly started selling — but the market eventually

stumbled back and rose smartly again.

"Investors change focus away from individual companies to worry that all will be dragged down," Kleintop said. But, he added, "We always head into a multiyear expansion — every recession."

His advice is to scoop up shares.

To be sure, bad economic reports aren't the only reason some stocks are down.

On Thursday, Google Inc. posted earnings that fell short of analyst expectations. The stock dropped \$34.41, or 7 percent, to \$459.61 the next day.

General Electric Co. topped profit estimates but reported lower-than-expected revenue. Ditto for Bank of America Corp. Investors walloped both companies, and understandably so. To keep generating profits, companies will eventually have to generate more revenue, not just cut costs.

The Dow Jones industrial average fell 261.41 points, or 2.5 percent, Friday to 10,097.90. The Standard & Poor's 500 index dropped 31.60, or 2.9 percent, to 1,064.88. For the week, the Dow fell 100.13 and the S&P 500 slid 13.08.

The coming week will bring plenty of new earnings reports that will help show if the selling is overdone.

On Monday, International Business Machines Corp. reports earnings, followed by Goldman Sachs Group Inc. the next day. Later in the week come reports from Coca-Cola Co., Amazon.com Inc. and Microsoft Corp.

Amid the gloom, though, it's not certain anyone will pay attention. □

Govt watchdog criticizes handling of car dealers

By **KEN THOMAS**,

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — The Treasury Department failed to consider the economic fallout when it told General Motors and Chrysler to quickly shutter many dealerships as part of government-led bankruptcies, a federal watchdog found.

A report released Sunday by the special inspector general for the government's bailout program raised questions about whether the Obama administration's auto task force considered the job losses from the closings while pressuring the companies to reduce costs.

Treasury didn't show why the cuts were "either necessary for the sake of the companies' economic survival or prudent for the sake of the nation's economic recovery," said the audit by Neil Barofsky, the special inspector general for the Troubled Asset Relief Program, the \$787 billion stimulus program known as TARP. "Treasury made a series of decisions that may have substantially contributed to the accelerated shuttering of thousands of small businesses," investigators said.

Those decisions resulted in "potentially adding tens of thousands of workers to the already lengthy unemployment rolls — all based on a theory and without sufficient consideration of the decisions' broader economic impact," the report said.

Treasury officials said they strongly disagreed with many of the findings and said the companies have rebounded because of the government's efforts.

Herbert M. Allison Jr., Treasury's assistant secretary for financial stability, said the administration's actions "not only avoided a potentially catastrophic collapse and brought needed stability to the entire auto industry, but they also saved hundreds of thousands of American jobs and gave GM and Chrysler a chance to re-emerge as viable, competitive American businesses."

The audit also found that General Motors "did not consistently follow its stated criteria" for reducing its dealer network and noted that Chrysler failed to offer an appeals process.

The report, sought by lawmakers critical of the dealership closings, was seized upon by Republicans who have questioned the administration's dealings with private industry during the economic downturn.

Rep. Darrell Issa, R-Calif., said the audit "should serve as a wake-up call as to the implications of politically orchestrated bailouts and how putting decisions about private enterprise in the hands of political appointees and bureaucrats can lead to costly and unintended consequences."

GM's initial plan submitted to the government in February 2009 called for the gradual reduction of 1,650 of its 5,750 dealers by the end of 2014. Chrysler pointed to plans to trim its network from 3,181 dealers to about 2,000 dealers by 2014.

After Treasury rejected those earlier plans, the two companies released accelerated efforts to cut their dealership ranks. Chrysler said it would quickly close 789 dealers by June 2009 and GM said it would slash its dealer ranks by 1,454 by October 2010.

Following a fierce lobbying campaign by car dealers, Congress approved legislation last year requiring arbitration for closed dealers. GM said it would reinstate more than 660 dealers it had threatened with closure, reducing the number of dealers planning to appeal. □



AL Roundup

Jeanmar Gomez wins MLB debut as Indians top Tigers

CLEVELAND (AP)—Jhonny Peralta's flyball sent Detroit's Ryan Raburn crashing through a bullpen door for an inside-the-park homer, and Jeanmar Gomez won his major league debut as the Cleveland Indians beat the Tigers 7-2 victory Sunday to complete a four-game sweep.

Gomez (1-0), called up from minor league side Columbus to make a spot start, allowed two unearned runs over seven innings.

With runners on first and second and two outs, Peralta hit a 1-1 pitch from Andy Oliver (0-4) toward the Cleveland bullpen. Centerfielder Raburn tried for a leaping catch, but tumbled through the bullpen door.

The ball caromed off the wall



Detroit Tigers center fielder Ryan Raburn cannot get to the ball on an inside-the-park home run by Cleveland Indians' Jhonny Peralta's in the first inning of a baseball game in Cleveland on Sunday, July 18, 2010. Raburn crashed the the bullpen door trying to make the catch.



and by the time left fielder Brennan Boesch could retrieve it, Peralta, one of the slowest players on Cleveland's roster, was chugging around the bases.

At New York, Alex Rodriguez and the New York Yankees knocked around All-Star pitcher David Price, overcoming an early injury to Andy Pettitte with brilliant work by the bullpen to beat Tampa Bay.

Robinson Cano hit a two-run triple, Jorge Posada a two-run double and Rodriguez added his 598th home run for the Yankees, who took two of three in a series between the top two teams in baseball to move three games ahead of Tampa Bay in the AL East.

Associated Press

Continued on Page 14



FILE - in this July 15, 2010, file photo, Indiana Fever's Tamika Catchings (24) drives to the basket past Charlotte Sting's Tangelia Smith during the second half of a WNBA basketball game in Charlotte, N.C. Former NBA player Harvey Catchings beams every time he goes to Indiana Fever games and sees fans wearing daughter Tamika's No. 24 jersey.

Associated Press

WNBA Roundup

Catchings lifts Fever past Liberty 84-81 in overtime

NEW YORK (AP) — Tamika Catchings scored nine of her 22 points in overtime to lift the Indiana Fever to an 84-81 victory over the New York Liberty in the WNBA on Sunday. Katie Douglas had 21 points and Ebony Hoffman added 15 points to help the Fever (13-7) beat the Liberty for the seventh straight time. Catchings also had 10 rebounds and seven assists as Indiana moved into first place in the Eastern Conference, percentage points ahead of Atlanta.

Cappie Pondexter had a franchise-record and career-high 40 points for New York (9-10). Leilani Mitchell scored 15 on 5-for-6 shooting on 3-pointers and Janel McCarville added 12 points.

The Liberty's previous record was 33 points, by Becky Hammon at Minnesota on June 6, 2003, and McCarville at Houston on Sept. 2, 2008. Pondexter's eclipsed her previous best of 35 for Phoenix against Detroit on July 6, 2006.

Sky 61, Mystics 59

At Washington, Sylvia Fowles scored 13 points, including the go-ahead inside basket, to help Chicago beat Washington.

Dominique Canty scored 11 points and Jia Perkins added 10 for the Sky (11-11), who won three straight for the first time since they won four in a row from May 27 and June 5. Fowles also had 11 rebounds for her sixth straight double double.

Crystal Langhorne scored 12 points and Marissa Coleman added 11 for Washington (12-7), which lost two straight for the first time since losing three in a row in late May. Silver Stars 83, Sparks 73

At San Antonio, Roneeka Hodges scored a season-high 24 points to help San Antonio down Los Angeles and end a three-game losing streak.

Hodges, starting for the first time since June 6, was 6 of 10 from 3-point range. She had 13 points in the first half and 11 in the third quarter to lead San Antonio's 26-12 run.

Becky Hammon scored 21 points and Sophia Young added 17 for the Silver Stars (7-12), who moved into a third-place tie in the West with Minnesota, a half game behind Phoenix. Tina Thompson scored 23 points, including 17 in a fourth-quarter rally that allowed Los Angeles (5-15) to get within five. □

Floyd Mayweather silent on status of Pacquiao talks

TIM REYNOLDS

AP Sports Writer

MIAMI (AP) — A day after allowing a deadline for striking a deal on a superfight with Manny Pacquiao to pass without saying anything, Floyd Mayweather Jr indicated Sunday that his stance wouldn't be changing anytime soon.

"I'm not interested in rushing to do anything," Mayweather told The Associated Press.

Appearing in Miami as a coach at a charity basketball game hosted by Dwyane Wade and Alonzo Mourning, Mayweather happily fielded questions about the NBA. But when talk turned to boxing — and Pacquiao in particular — the fighter known as Money simply wouldn't respond.

Mayweather's camp did not respond to a deadline early Saturday put in place by Pacquiao promoter Top Rank for exclusive negotiations, which has put what could be the richest fight in boxing history in doubt.

Mayweather and Pacquiao are clearly the two biggest stars in the sport but have not signed a deal despite months of negotiations.

"I'm not really thinking about boxing right now," Mayweather said. "I'm just relaxing. I fought about 60 days ago, so I'm just enjoying myself, enjoying life, enjoying my family and enjoying my vacation."

Mayweather has appeared at the event Mourning founded known as the Summer Groove in past years, plus has grabbed courtside seats at Heat games during previous trips to Miami. But there was a certain irony to his appearance Sunday: Mayweather was a coach on the bench that the Heat occupy, sitting in the seat that Miami coach Erik Spoelstra uses during games.

Spoelstra is of Filipino descent, and is a huge Pacquiao fan.

"I'm supporting all basketball players because I'm a fan of basketball," Mayweather said. Pacquiao already has agreed to an equitable split of the earnings from the megafight, along with extensive drug testing. The two sides nearly came to terms earlier this year, but the fight didn't happen then because Pacquiao was reticent about blood testing close to a

fight.

Pacquiao ended up routing Joshua Clottey before about 50,000 fans at Cowboys

Stadium in March, while Mayweather easily defeated Shane Mosley in May.

Although he hasn't spoken

directly to Mayweather, Top Rank promoter Bob Arum said he believes the former pound-for-pound champion might

be reluctant to fight this year because of the legal woes of Roger Mayweather, his uncle and longtime trainer. □



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AL ROUNDU

Continued from Page 12

Five relievers picked up for Pettitte, who came out in the third inning because of a strained left groin. The 38-year-old All-Star was taken

New York Yankees' Alex Rodriguez, right, high-fives third base coach Rob Thomson after Rodriguez hit a home run during the seventh inning of a baseball game against the Tampa Bay Rays on Sunday, July 18, 2010, at Yankee Stadium in New York. The Yankees won 9-5.

Associated Press

to New York-Presbyterian Hospital for an MRI, the team said.

Park Chan-ho (2-1) pitched 1 1-3 hitless innings for the win.

At Boston, C.J. Wilson struck out a career-high 10 batters and Texas capitalized on Boston's throwing problems to beat the Red Sox.

The Rangers scored in the fourth when third baseman Adrian Beltre couldn't handle catcher Dusty Brown's throw as Nelson Cruz headed for the base. They got another run in

the fifth when Julio Borbon stole home after Brown threw to second where Andrus was trying to steal.

Wilson (8-5) worked 6 2-3 innings, allowing one run on three hits but walking five.

Jon Lester (11-4) pitched eight innings in the loss.

At Baltimore, Yunel Escobar hit his first career grand slam during a six-run second inning as Toronto completed a three-game sweep Baltimore.

Playing his third game with the Blue Jays since being traded by the Atlanta Braves, Escobar tied a career high with five RBIs and got three hits to increase his batting average with Toronto to .462. He hit .238 with no homers in 75 games with Atlanta.

Escobar's shot off rookie Brian Matusz (3-10) stretched Toronto's major league-leading home run total to 140. At Kansas City, Missouri, Adam Rosales, Kevin Kouzmanoff and Jack Cust each went deep, and Vin Mazzaro pitched into the eighth inning to help the Oakland finish a three-game sweep of Kansas City.

The A's have won five straight and 12 of 18 to even their record at 46-46, the first time they have been at .500 since June 15. The Royals have lost six straight, one shy of their longest losing streak this season.

Mazzaro (5-2) limited the Royals to seven hits — all singles — in a career-high 7 2-3 innings.

At Anaheim, California, Jose Lopez hit a tiebreaking RBI single in the 10th inning, helping the Seattle snap an eight-game losing streak to Angels.

Ichiro Suzuki drew a leadoff walk from Kevin Jepsen (2-2) and advanced on Chone Figgins' sacrifice bunt. He then was caught in a rundown on a Franklin Gutierrez's grounder to shortstop. Gutierrez stole second and scored when Lopez lined a 2-1 pitch to left field.

In other AL games it was Cleveland 7, Detroit 2; N.Y. Yankees 9, Tampa Bay 5; Texas 4, Boston 2; Toronto 10, Baltimore 1; Minnesota 7, Chicago White Sox 6; Oakland 9, Kansas City 6; and Seattle 2, L.A. Angels 1, 10 innings. □

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Riblon wins Tour de France mountain leg

NAOMI KOPPEL

Associated Press Writer

AX-3 DOMAINES, France (AP) — Christophe Riblon took the first Pyrenees stage of the Tour de France on Sunday, leading the field from the first few kilometers to a solo victory high in the mountains. Andy Schleck held on to the leader's yellow jersey in a stage that failed to separate the major contenders.

It was the first Tour de France victory for the 29-year-old Frenchman and the biggest of his career to date.

"I've been a professional for 5½ years and I've been waiting for this for 5½ years," Riblon said. He broke away in a small group in the first 30 kilometers of the race, but slipped away from the last of that group on the major climb of the day, the Port de Pailheres. He held his lead over the top and down the long descent before the climb up to the ski resort of Ax-3 Domaines.

"My aim was to arrive at the bottom with as much time as possible without losing all my strength. Then I did a good climb," Riblon said.

He finished in 4 hours, 52 minutes, 42 seconds — 54 seconds ahead of Denis Menchov of Russia and Samuel Sanchez of Spain.

It was the fourth French win of the Tour de France this year — after two by Sylvain Chavanel and one from Sandy Casar — and it delighted the crowd, who in past years have struggled to find home success to celebrate.

Schleck finished fourth at 1:08, in a group that also included his closest rival, defending champion Alberto Contador of Spain. The pair stuck together throughout the 114.7-mile 14th stage from Revel. Schleck said he hadn't dared overtake Contador for fear that the Spaniard would launch a late attack and go past him.

"I feel really good, and if he wants to get me tomorrow, he has to be really good," Schleck added.

Schleck holds the yellow jersey of overall leader by 31 seconds from Contador, with Sanchez now 2:31 back. Menchov is fourth at 2:44.

Monday's 15th stage is the second in the Pyrenees and takes the riders 116.5 miles from Pamiers to



Christophe Riblon of France crosses the finish line to win the 14th stage of the Tour de France cycling race over 114.6 miles with start in Revel and finish in Ax Trois Domaines, Pyrenees region, France, Sunday, July 18, 2010.

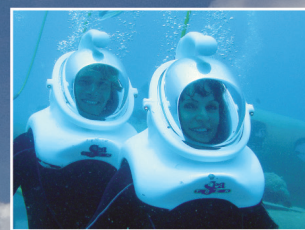
Associated Press

Bagnères-de-Luchon, over the major climb of Port de Bales before descending to finish on the flat. □

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SPORTS
Aruba TODAY

Oosthuizen pulls away to dominating Open title

DOUG FERGUSON

AP Golf Writer

ST. ANDREWS, Scotland (AP) — Louis Oosthuizen walked over the Swilcan Bridge toward a British Open victory that was never in doubt Sunday at St. Andrews, another big moment in sports for South Africa.

This celebration, though, carried a different tune.

The drone of vuvuzelas, all the rage at the World Cup, was replaced by the skirl of bagpipes coming from behind the Royal & Ancient clubhouse. For the 27-year-old South African, the sound could not have been sweeter. With a performance that rivaled the dominance of Tiger Woods at the home of golf 10 years ago, Oosthuizen led over the final 48 holes and blew away the field by seven shots.

“Towinan Open championship is special,” Oosthuizen said. “But to win it at St. Andrews ... it’s something you dream about.”

The timing could not have been better — one week after South Africa concluded a wildly popular World Cup, and the day Nelson Mandela celebrated his 92nd birthday. “It felt a bit special, really,” he said. “When I walked down 18, I was thinking about his birthday.”

By then, the hard work was done. Oosthuizen made only two bogeys over the final 35 holes in a strong wind that swept across the Old Course. He closed with a 1-under 71 for a seven-shot victory over Lee Westwood, who was never in the game.

The only challenge came from Paul Casey, who got within three shots after the eighth hole, then drove the green on the par-4 ninth. Oosthuizen answered by hitting driver onto the green and knocking in a 50-foot eagle putt to restore his cushion.



South Africa's Louis Oosthuizen holds his trophy aloft after winning the British Open Golf Championship on the Old Course at St. Andrews, Scotland, Sunday, July 18, 2010.

Three holes later, Casey hit into a gorse bush and made triple bogey, while Oosthuizen holed an 18-foot birdie putt. Oosthuizen spent the final hour soaking up an atmosphere unlike any other in golf with his caddie, Zack Rasego. He finished at 16-under 272 and became the first player since Tony Lema in 1964 to win his first major at St. Andrews. Just as Lema did when he won, Oosthuizen ordered bottles of champagne for the press. Never mind that everyone struggled to pronounce his name. All that mattered was the spelling on the bottom of that claret jug. And yes, the engraver used the abbreviated version — Louis — not his given name of Lodewicus Theodorus Oosthuizen. With the fifth victory of his career, Oosthuizen moved to No. 15 in the world. And as a sign of just how global golf has become, it's the second time this decade that the four major championship trophies reside on four continents. “Nobody was going to stop him,” said Casey, whose adventures in the gorse sent him to a 75 and a tie for third

with Rory McIlroy (68) and Henrik Stenson (71). “He didn’t miss a shot today. I don’t know if he missed one all week. That was four days of tremendous golf. He didn’t flinch today.” No, there was only that gap-tooth smile that earned him the nickname “Shrek” from his friends. And there was amazement across his face when he cradled the oldest trophy in golf, a silver claret jug with his name etched alongside Woods, Jack Nicklaus, Ben Hogan, and the other South African winners — Gary Player, Bobby Locke and Ernie Els, his mentor. Without the Ernie Els & Fancourt Foundation in South Africa, Oosthuizen, the son of a farmer, could not have afforded the travel required to reach the game’s highest level. “It was great to have a South African winning it on Mandela Day,” said Dennis Bruyns, the chief executive of the Southern Africa PGA. “And there was a great sense of satisfaction in having a South African caddie with him, too.” It was the fifth major for the

Springboks dating to Retief Goosen winning the U.S. Open in 2001, and the first at the British Open since Els won at Muirfield in 2002, a victory that inspired Oosthuizen. “Shrek is on the move,” Goosen said. “I knew he had a lot of talent. He grew up in an area (Mossel Bay) that’s very windy, so for him, these conditions are normal. The guy’s got one of the best swings on tour. I think he’ll be around for many years to come.” Some 45 miles (70 kilometers) away, Player was returning from a golf outing and listening to every shot on the radio, proud as can be. He saw the potential during a practice round they played at the Masters this year. Player called Oosthuizen on Sunday morning and gave him a pep talk. “I told him he’s got to realize that lots of people are hitting bad shots,” Player said, not knowing how few of those the kid would hit. “And I told him the crowd was naturally going to show a bias. But I reminded him when I played Arnold Palmer in 1961 at the Masters,

only my wife and my dog was pulling for me. I told him he’s got to get in there and be more determined to win.”

Oosthuizen was relaxed as he could be, putting his arm around Rasego after hitting off the 18th tee and walking over the Swilcan Bridge, thousands of fans packed into the grandstands, along the road and peering out the shop windows. “It’s a proud moment for us, especially with the Old Man, winning on his birthday,” Rosega said. “Winning at St. Andrews, it’s unbelievable. He deserves what he’s just done.”

The 150th anniversary of golf’s oldest championship was memorable in so many ways.

It began with Rory McIlroy tying the major championship record with a 63 in some of the calmest conditions at the course. It ended with someone other than Woods hoisting the claret jug in front of the R&A clubhouse.

Woods tapped in on the final hole and removed his cap to salute the gallery, just as he did the last two Opens at St. Andrews. Only this time, the tournament was still two hours from finishing. Woods made two double bogeys on his way to a 72 and tied for 23rd.

It was his seventh tournament of the year without a victory, matching the longest drought of his career.

“I’m not going to win all of them,” Woods said after his worst 72-hole finish in a major in six years. “I’ve lost a lot more than I’ve won.”

No way he was going to win this one. Neither was anyone else. Oosthuizen might have been nervous, but it didn’t show. Charl Schwartzel, his best friend from their junior golf days in South Africa, ran into him on Saturday and said Oosthuizen was showing him comedy videos on his phone. □

Dutch, Venezuelan diplomats discuss differences

Aruba / Dutch delegation return from Caracas



ORANJESTAD – The foreign ministers of the Netherlands and Venezuela agreed to strengthen cooperation after President Hugo Chavez’s government protested what it called violations of its airspace by a Dutch military aircraft, authorities said Saturday. Dutch Foreign Minister Maxime Verhagen met with his Venezuelan counterpart, Nicolas Maduro, who called it a welcome opportunity to discuss “the differences we have and to be able to communicate more closely and build an agenda,” the Venezuelan government said in a statement.

The self-governing Dutch islands of Aruba, Curacao and Bonaire lie off Venezuela’s coast, and Chavez’s government complained that a Dutch military aircraft violated its airspace three times earlier this month. Chavez on Wednesday publicly questioned how long the Dutch islands off Venezuela’s coast will remain part of the Netherlands and said he believes they will one day be independent. Verhagen was accompanied by the leaders of Aruba including Prime Minister Mike Eman and leaders from the Netherlands Antilles for the talks Friday

night. A joint government statement released by Venezuela said the foreign ministers reaffirmed a commitment to “absolute respect of territorial integrity and sovereignty.” It said they also agreed to study the possible construction of a natural-gas pipeline from Venezuela to Aruba, and expressed support for maintaining a cooperative relationship between Venezuela’s state oil company and oil refineries in Aruba and Curacao.

Continued on Page B3

At the Surfside Marina

Art Rules Aruba Launches Two Weeks of Artistic Endeavors



ORANJESTAD— Almost two hundred and fifty youthful participants showed up on time, at 6 p.m. on Friday, at the Surfside Marina, as Art Rules Aruba 2010 launched its official press conference and social mixers, at sunset.

Many of them came with their parents in tow, equally eager to meet the people who made the educational Arts Program for the Youth of Aruba possible.

Continued on Pages B8 & 9



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PALM BEACH – The health and calorie conscious among us need fear steakhouses no more. Whether it's a low-carb, low-fat, or even vegetarian diet you follow, Texas de Brazil Churrascaria fits into just about every dieter's menu plan.

Low carb eaters will have all their expectations surpassed with a tempting carnivorous selection of umpteen cuts of sizzling beef, pork, lamb, sausage, and poultry. The meats are prepared in the healthiest style of cooking—slow roasting—where much of the fat drips off in the roasting process, so those looking for a lower fat option to sautéing, pan frying, or deep frying will also be able to indulge.

The Brazilian-style steakhouse also offers a garden full of healthy eats on a lavish 40-item seasonal salad bar, giving dieters plenty to choose from to accompany the

slow-roasted meats. A selection of fresh lettuces and vegetables may be standard for most salad bars, but **Texas de Brazil's** version goes a gourmet twist further, treating the palate to additional items like marinated portabella mushrooms, sweet roasted bell peppers, hearts of palm, sundried tomatoes, imported cheeses—including fresh buffalo mozzarella—sushi, home-made soups, and much more.

The salad bar is included in the continuous service meal with unlimited choices from the grilled meats, but for vegetarians or the non-meat eaters, a special price is offered for just the salad bar. Of course, for those looking to splurge while on vacation, **Texas de Brazil** will gladly serve their garlic mashed potatoes, traditional fried plantains, and their world-famous parmesan cheese bread as part of the meal.

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Food Store - Take Out - Wood Fired Grill

A gourmet kitchen where delicious food is cooked to order for fresh take out just opened behind Certified Mega Mall under the simple name, The Kitchen Aruba. Chef Sander van Kints who made the wood fired grill at Yemanjá restaurant famous, spread his wings and opened his own kitchen where he serves just-made dishes, cooked while patrons are watching. The daily menu changes to feature his specialties all home made, from scratch.

You may buy a bottle of wine or Champagne at the food store bodega, to go with your meal.

Chef Sander who built The Kitchen himself is proud of his creation, a one of a kind food store, with the freshest ingredients, cooked a la minute, in a state of the art kitchen.

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buy quality meals, and enjoy them in their own hotel room, and for busy locals who want to upgrade their

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Seared Tuna - Wakame - Soy Dressing	\$ 9.00

Salads

Grilled Vegetables - Coriander Cream	\$ 8.00
Greek - Feta - Olives - Tomatoes - Tzaziki	\$ 8.00
Caesar - Romaine - Parmesan - Croutons	\$ 8.00

Soups

French Onion, Tomato Basil, or Seafood Chowder	\$ 5.00
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Sandwiches - Wraps

Black Angus Steak Sandwich or Wrap	\$ 7.00
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Black Angus Chuck Steak Burger	\$ 7.00

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Surf & Turf - Tenderloin - Shrimp - Herb Butter & Lime	\$ 14.00
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Brazilian Moqueca - Seafood Mix - Coconut Bell Pepper Sauce	\$ 14.00

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- Grouper Fillet	\$ 9.50
- Seafood Mix	\$ 11.00
All Entrees Are Served With Rice, Sautéed Potatoes, Stir-Fry Vegetables and Brazilian Black Beans.	

Pasta Dishes

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Farfalle Bolognese - Ground Angus Steak - Tomatoes - Mozzarella	\$ 9.50
Chicken Alfredo - Vegetables - Fettuccine - Mozzarella	\$ 10.00

Desserts

Grilled Pineapple - Bourbon Vanilla - Chardonnay Reduction	\$ 3.00
Belgian Chocolate Mousse - Passion Fruit Coulis	\$ 3.00
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Aruba / Dutch delegation return from Caracas



Continued from Page B1

Last week, Chavez told the Netherlands To "Stop Provoking" His Country. Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez said that a Dutch military airplane recently violated Venezuelan airspace on multiple occasions, and said the incursions could have diplomatic repercussions.

A statement from the Venezuelan government said it was able to positively identify the airplane, which they claim penetrated its airspace three times, "even through the aircraft used techniques to hide its position and identification."

The statement says that diplomatic relations between the countries could suffer if the flights continue. "Venezuela demands that the government of the Netherlands take the necessary measures so these acts of provocation cease," the statement said.

The Associated Press reports that no specifics as to the origins of the flights

were given, but that Chavez has taken The Netherlands to task in the past for allowing the U.S. military to stage operations on Dutch

islands off the Venezuelan coast. Chavez sees those actions as preparations for a possible military attack against Venezuela.



San Francisco's famous cioppino receives raves at Aqua Grill



PALM BEACH - It's the true San Francisco treat-a culinary masterpiece of fresh seafood simplicity seen on the table's of Italian and Portuguese immigrant fishermen for generations. Cioppino is now a San Francisco mainstay on the menus of traditional wharf

eateries and chic, trendy restaurants alike. Aqua Grill, the island's critically-acclaimed seafood restaurant in Palm Beach, serves the fresh fisherman's stew, which is one of their most popular dishes. Aqua Grill's Chef Scott

Scheuerman prepares his utilizing the old fishermen's traditions, with a light herbal tomato broth flavored with red wine, saffron, and fennel. One of the world's most respected travel guides, Fodor's, raves about Aruba's chic seafood restaurant, and gives special



mention to the cioppino that is loaded with fresh lobster, shrimp, scallops, mussels, clams, and calamari.

Aqua Grill specializes in fresh local catches prepared on a wood grill, along with several other regional specialties like San Francisco's cioppino and live Maine lobster. □

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At the Radisson Aruba Resort Casino & Spa

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PALM BEACH – Germaine Wever, Mathilde Clement and Gianina Ras, the team in charge of the Plaza Club, enjoyed the Sunset Grille hospitality on Saturday night.

The three hard-working hotel executives were wine and dined by the Food &

Beverage Department, in gratitude of their ongoing support of the restaurant.

The Plaza Club occupies the seventh and eighth floors of the Aruba building, at the Radisson Aruba Resort Casino & Spa and offers 40 rooms, including three suites, creating an exceptional

resort experience within the Four Diamond resort.

The well-appointed rooms and suites also offer access to the Plaza Club Lounge where guest are treated to a daily complimentary continental breakfast, afternoon tea and cocktail



hour. They are also provided with private check-in and concierge services, by Germaine, Mathilde & Gianina.

The ladies enjoyed delectable four-diamond dining, Apple Martini Salad, King Crab Legs, Grilled Rib Eye Steak

with Portobello Mushroom Sauce, Macademia Nut Crusted Grouper, Filet Mignon with Béarnaise Sauce, and Chocolate & Coconut Souffle, off the award winning menu, that earned the place the “best restaurant in the Caribbean,” rating. □



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HUMAN HINTS

Doubt Is Your Friend

We all have fears and doubts which manifest differently within each of us. Whether we hear voices, see visions or something entirely different, self-doubt plays on our internal fears and insecurities. We create our own Doubt, and we know exactly how to manipulate our selves. Dealing with doubt is part of being Human.

Doubting ourselves is healthy and necessary because it helps temper our natural arrogance. We all know how arrogant people can become in the lack of humility. Doubt

hones our resolve and shows us our weaknesses. It gives us the chance to grow by overcoming our self-created challenges.

The force of doubt can also be bad for us because it will undermine our courage if we let it. Without courage, we can't act. In order to maintain your courage in the face of self-doubt, keep your self in action. Action builds Courage, which builds the ability to Act. Your task is to stay active toward a goal.

No matter what physical

action you take, remember that as long as you act with good intentions, the outcome of your action doesn't matter. Your intentions and actions determine who you are. The results of your actions have nothing to do with who you are. Success and failure do not determine the person. The Passion of the Pursuit defines the Person.

We think of ourselves and others in terms of our successes and failures, but this view misses the entire point. A person is defined by their approach to the pursuit of their goals. How do you act under pressure? When the plan veers off course and the day careens out of control, how do you react? When you encounter dramatic surprises, how flexible are you to your circumstances? How does your cleverness manifest in your life?

Doubt sharpens our life skills and makes us stronger. It is the built-in resistance safety mechanism that stops us from destroying ourselves, as we certainly would if left unchecked. We have proven many times that we cannot control our own greed and arrogance. Imagine how out of control the Human race

would be if no one doubted themselves.

Doubt is a construct of our own mind. Don't believe most of what is in your head. Most thoughts and images are random background noise that we're all exposed to all the time. Random Human Consciousness Noise permeates all of our heads all the time, even when we're sleeping. We become aware of the Noise that we resonate with in some way. Some people pay more attention to the random noise than others. If we take it too seriously, we cross the line of accepted social sanity. Insanity is believing every thought you have, or taking your random thoughts too seriously.

When you're depressed and throughout your entire life, never stop taking action toward a goal. Ignore most of what is in your head. Use your self-doubt to strengthen your weaknesses, and to fill gaps in your knowledge. Pinpoint what you doubt about yourself, and come up with solutions to your Doubt's questions.

Self-Doubt is our constant Imaginary Challenge that we create for ourselves to

sharpen our skills and drive us forward. Keep taking action so that self-doubt does not undermine your courage.

Until Tomorrow...


Go to www.HumanHints.com to sign up to receive this column in your email each day.

~Quentin Danziger


Quentin has over 20 years experience balancing what we refer to as the Real World, with science and spirit. He has held positions of responsibility and authority, received a Bachelor of Science in Engineering Physics from Colorado School of Mines, and has also studied many avenues of alternative thought. HumanHints is the culmination of his knowledge, experience and practice. These free daily emails detail concrete, real-world techniques to consciously create any future you choose, while in the throes of daily life created by outdated modes of thought.

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PG-13	GROWN UPS			
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	matinee:	12:00	2:30	late show: 11:30
PG	TOY STORY 3 3D			
	daily:		6:15	
	matinee:	1:15	3:45	late show:
PG-13	THE TWILIGHT SAGA: ECLIPSE			
	daily:		8:45	
	matinee:			late show: 11:30
PG-13	PREDATORS			
	daily:	4:15	6:45	9:30
	matinee:	1:30		late show: 12:00
PG	THE LAST AIRBENDER			
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NEW	matinee:	12:15	2:30	late show:
PG	THE SORCERER'S APPRENTICE			
	daily:	6:00	8:30	
NEW	matinee:	1:00	3:30	late show: 11:00
PG	THE LAS AIRBENDER			
	daily:	7:00	9:15	
	matinee:			late show: 11:30
PG-13	GROWN UPS			
	daily:	4:45	7:15	9:30
	matinee:	12:00	2:30	late show: 11:45
PG	KNIGHT & DAY			
	daily:	4:00	6:30	9:00
	matinee:	1:30		late show: 11:30
PG	THE KARATE KID			
	daily:	6:00	8:45	
	matinee:	12:00	3:00	late show: 11:45
PG	TOY STORY 3 3D			
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The French Steakhouse delivers dining under the stars



Seafood dishes range from the fresh Catch of the Day, prepared according to preference, to the amazingly decadent Caribbean Stuffed Shrimp with Crabmeat and Bacon. The tequila and sweet-chili glaze lends the jumbo shrimp a pure taste of heaven! Light eaters will find the Jerk-Curried Chicken Skewers and the Lemon-Herb Broiled Chicken very satisfying while meat-lovers should opt for the restaurant's famous South American Certified Beef Churrasco or a juicy USDA beef selection such as the Charcoal NY Sirloin Steak or the Grilled Filet Mignon. Hungrier patrons will appreciate the Ambassador's 5-Course Menu featuring the run of the regular menu's highlights for just \$34.95 per person. The French Steakhouse at Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa offers a truly unique dining experience—indoor or out—7 days a week from 5:30 PM to 11 PM. For more information, please visit <http://www.manchebo.com/steakhouse/> □

Eagle Beach – The French Steakhouse at the Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa prides itself on the elegant dining experience it offers patrons. Reminiscent of a 1950s French café, the fully air-conditioned indoor dining room delights diners with its sparkling china, crisp linen, interesting bread baskets, and hand-painted tiles bordering the walls. A gracious staff, colossal desserts, and live jazz performed by Eddy Samson on piano add the perfect touches.

Yet recently the idea of adding a garden spot to the existing blueprint began to sprout in the creative mind of Executive Chef George Hoek, and he immediately recruited the landscapers to create the intimate, lovely setting. Now patrons have another charming dining option at the French Steakhouse—a tropical alfresco courtyard featuring delicious cuisine under the stars. Diners can choose from the restaurant's famed "Ooh-La-La" menu offerings, including creative appetizers, soups, salads, seafood dishes, poultry, and the pièce de résistance—South American and USDA beef specialties. Among other popular appetizers, the chef's Tropical Crab Cakes with pineapple-mango salsa and the Teriyaki-Glazed Seared Duck Breast served with garden greens and balsamic dressing are real crowd-pleasers. The French Onion Soup is true to the restaurant's roots while the Honey-Glazed Salmon Salad winks at the exotic East with a sweet soy dressing.

Giorgio's Ristorante Italiano introduces Menu Turistico



Eagle Beach -- Giorgio's Ristorante Italiano, located at the Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa in the heart of the low-rise hotel area, delivers authentic Mediterranean flavors at a reasonable price in a charming alfresco poolside setting. The restaurant has just introduced Menu Turistico, a 3-course dinner featuring an appetizer, main course, and dessert for just \$19.95 per person, plus 15% service charge. Patrons may choose between homemade soup and Caesar salad for the starter; between Fettuccini Alfredo, Lasagna Casarecia, Spaghetti alla Bolognese, and any favorite pizza for the main course; and between tiramisu, cheesecake, and ice cream for the sweet finale. Of course, the regular menu

continues to offer delicious antipasto and salads, like the Calamari Fritti and the Insalati Bisto; hearty Italian soups; fresh fish dishes, including Salmone Affogaro in Bianco; pasta dishes, like the Tortellini alla Gorgonzola; pizzas; meat dishes, like the Fileto Di Bue alla Castellana; decadent desserts, such as the Cream-Filled Cannoli; flavorful coffees; and the finest Italian wines.

Executive Chef George Hoek is the resort's much-appreciated culinary expert. He was the recent recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Shoco Award, presented by the Aruba Hotel & Tourism Association in collaboration with the Digicel Group. The award is a national award of excellence and Aruba's top professional decoration in the hospitality industry. Open 7 days a week for breakfast and dinner, Giorgio's makes authentic Italian cuisine a reality on Aruba. Patrons are cordially invited to bring a healthy appetite. □

Pega Pega Café & Beach Bar reinvents beach cuisine



Eagle Beach – Pega Pega Café & Beach Bar at the Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa is widely recognized as the home of beach cuisine. Executive Chef George Hoek and his culinary team serve a sun-splashed menu on the oceanfront terrace, raising the restaurant to must-try status. Inspired by American, Mexican, Thai, Jamaican, Cuban, Greek, and Mediterranean kitchens, the menu lists favorite international dishes all served with a tropical, Caribbean flair. Patrons can choose from a variety of tasty starters, like Wings on Fire and the Fiesta Snack Platter. Pega Pega's Sun-Sational Salads—including the Thai Chicken Salad and the Caribbean Fruit Symphony—provide a light lunch alternative. From the sandwich

board come the Cuban-Pressed Chicken Sandwich, the Grilled Grouper Reuben Sandwich, the Cudarebo Fish Taco, and the Philly Steak Sandwich. Mid-day platters also include vegetarian options and a variety of oversized beef burgers.

Pega Pega's tropical & frozen cocktail list leaves nothing out. A wide range of frosty beverages—from daiquiris, coladas, margaritas, and fruit or ice-cream smoothies to specialty blends like the Yellow Bird, Sex on the Beach, and the Cabuya—pretty much guarantees the perfect refreshing addition to lunch. A daily happy hour featuring live music is a great way to watch the sunset and kick off the evening.

Pega Pega Café & Beach Bar is open on fabulous Eagle Beach every day from noon to 5 PM for lunch and from 11 AM to 11 PM for drinks. Patrons are cordially welcomed to enjoy the unrivaled views, caring service, and relaxed atmosphere of one of Aruba's oldest beach bars. □



Art Rules Aruba Launches Two Weeks of Artistic Endeavors



Continued from Page B1
Founders Ira & Ayra Kip, of the Panacake Gallery Foundation, were on hand to greet participants and to introduce them to the dynamic crew of instructors from around the globe who over the next fortnight will conduct workshops in seven disciplines

such as Dance, Theater, Rap & Poetry, DJ-ing, Fashion, Photography & Design and Film. Art Rules Aruba is a private initiative, a vision that Ira & Ayra had for 29 years, aspiring to use their love for Arts as a tool to aim high, go global and make everything they stand



for, a reality. They came to the island about six months ago, and started drumming support for the program one florin at a time, one sponsor at the time, and thanks to their amazing tenacity and stick-to-it-tive-ness managed to make it happen, as envisioned and planned, and fill summer vacation of 2010 with purpose and content.



The attendance, says Shanouille Bikker, on behalf of Aruba Bank, exceeds our expectations, the bank is focusing on youth this year and this program is just very exciting. Other sponsors such as Ernst & Young & UNOCA helped welcome participants and wish them great progress and productive learning. Ira & Ayra report that the show at Cas Di Cultura on July 31st will showcase the students' progress, and the general public is invited to watch the final production, presenting an exclusive Theatrical Multimedia Art Exhibition and Performance. Tickets for the Art Rules Aruba showcase can be purchased at Cas di Cultura, Unoca and Scol Di Arte. For more information you can also visit www.artrulesaruba.com



Koninksrelaties and Marketing forward to an education summer program, as they meet the Art Rules Aruba cast of characters. Pictured here the excited faces of participants looking

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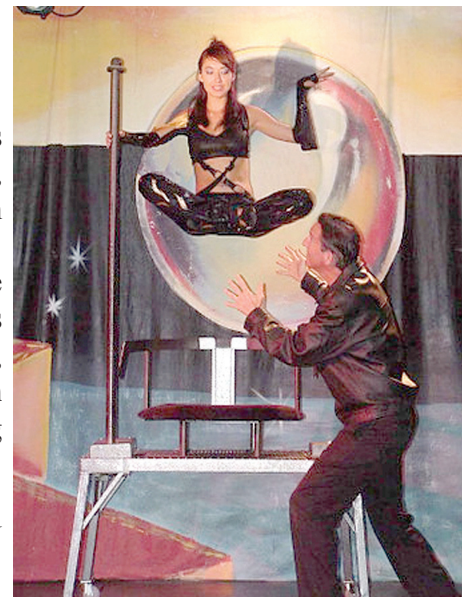
Butz, Belair, Maryland. 'MagicLive!...is Hip-Comedy Entertainment, Adam is the ultimate Modern Magician' - Jacque Polak, CBS-TV. Steinfeld sophisticated card-sharp street magic, mixed with grand theater illusions is a visual feast...this will be the highlight of your vacation. -Al Blanchard, mystery novelist, Boston, MA.

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Treating HIV also prevents its spread, study finds



An HIV patient receives a supply of antiretroviral drugs at a prison clinic in Jakarta. A major expert panel has recommended ahead of the start of the world AIDS conference that patients with HIV start antiretroviral drugs at an earlier stage of infection.

(AFP/File/Romeo Gacad)

By MARILYNN MARCHIONE,
AP Medical Writer

Provocative new research shows that treating people with the AIDS virus can provide a powerful bonus: It cuts the risk that they will infect others.

New infections plummeted in parts of Canada as more people went on AIDS drugs, which lowered the amount of virus they had and the chances they would spread it, the study found.

For every 100 people with HIV who started taking AIDS drugs, new infections dropped by 3 percent in British Columbia, where the study was done. The number of new infections there has been cut in half since 1996, matching a rise in treatment.

"The more people you put on therapy, the less transmission there is," said Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the U.S. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. The drop in new cases in Canada "likely could not be explained by anything else," he said.

The U.S. government helped pay for the study. Results

were published online Sunday by the British medical journal Lancet and were being presented at the International AIDS Conference in Vienna.

The results suggest that Canada's policy of free AIDS care is having a double benefit: to the people being treated and to the public's health.

In the United States, the study should boost efforts to more aggressively test and treat people, and to plug funding gaps that keep many from getting care now, AIDS experts said. An estimated 1.1 million Americans have HIV, and about 20 percent of them don't know it. About 55,000 new infections occur each year in the U.S., a number that has held steady for a decade.

Finding ways to prevent HIV infection is critical because there is no vaccine or cure for AIDS. Recommended treatment is a combination of medicines that lower the amount of virus that infected people harbor, often to undetectable levels.

A study a decade ago in Africa found that people with these very low levels of virus were less likely to infect others.

Treating pregnant women with HIV lowers the amount of virus they have and the risk they'll pass it on to their babies.

The new study is the first clear evidence that the same principle holds true on a population level, in everyday community settings.

It was led by Dr. Julio Montaner, director of the British Columbia Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS in Vancouver.

Researchers used patient registries from British Columbia's universal health care system to track HIV tests, new cases, treatments and virus levels since 1996, when modern AIDS drugs became available.

The number of infected people getting treatment rose from 837 in 1996 to 5,413 in 2009. The number of new HIV diagnoses fell from 702 to 338 per year during that time. The amount of virus that patients harbored also dropped and was directly related to fewer new cases being diagnosed in the population.

The trends were largely driven by more treatment and fewer new cases among injection drug users, as sharing needles raises the risk of spreading HIV.

Rates of other sexually spread diseases rose during the study period, suggesting that safer sex behaviors were not responsible for the drop in new HIV infections — treatment was.

"There's an ethical imperative" to provide care to people with HIV, and finding that this helps prevention "is an added bonus," said Dr. Jonathan Mermin, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's AIDS prevention

chief. "It's not enough on its own to stop the epidemic" and must be combined with safe sex and other prevention strategies, he said.

Mitchell Warren, executive director of the AIDS Vaccine Advocacy Coalition, a New York-based nonprofit group that has worked toward developing a vaccine and other prevention tools, said the study was "quite compelling" and "very strong evidence" that treatment cuts the risk of spreading infection.

Nearly every country, including

the U.S., has waiting lines for people to get treatment, he noted. And progress with this approach depends on getting more people tested.

Aggressive efforts to test and quickly treat anyone found to have HIV are under way in Washington, New York and San Francisco. The National Institutes of Health also has a study under way in seven countries, including the United States, to see if HIV treatment helps prevent spread of the virus to an uninfected partner.

Microneedles may make getting flu shots easier

By RANDOLPH E. SCHMID,
AP Science Writer

WASHINGTON — One day your annual flu shot could come in the mail.

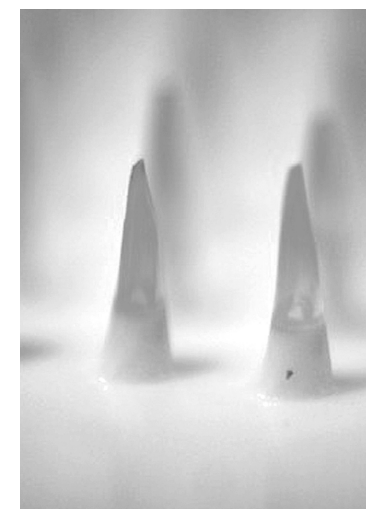
At least that's the hope of researchers developing a new method of vaccine delivery that people could even use at home: a patch with microneedles.

Microneedles?

That's right, tiny little needles so small you don't even feel them. Attached to a patch like a Band-Aid, the little needles barely penetrate the skin before they dissolve and release their vaccine.

Researchers led by Mark Prausnitz of Georgia Institute of Technology reported their research on microneedles in Sunday's edition of Nature Medicine.

The business side of the patch feels like fine sandpaper, he said. In tests of microneedles without vaccine, people rated the discomfort at one-tenth to one-twentieth that of getting a standard injection, he said. Nearly everyone said it was painless.



This undated photo provided by the Nature Publishing Group shows a microscopic image of dissolving microneedles, shown here encapsulating a pink dye to simulate how a vaccine would be incorporated into the needles. Influenza vaccination can be achieved using microneedle-covered patches applied to the skin as reported in the Sunday, July 18, 2010 edition of Nature Medicine. The study, conducted on mice, found that the microneedle patches were more efficient at clearing the lungs of virus and improved the immune system's antibody memory.

(AP Photo/Nature Publishing Group)

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INDOOR & OPEN AIR

Telefonica deal to buy Brazil's Vivo falls apart

By HAROLD HECKLE, Associated Press Writer
MADRID — Spanish telecommunications giant Telefonica on Saturday pulled out of negotiations to acquire a euro7.15 billion (\$9.3 billion) stake in Brazil's leading cell phone company Vivo.

Telefonica said in a statement to Madrid's stock exchange early Saturday that the deal fell through after Portugal Telecom's board of directors failed to accept the Spanish company's offer by the deadline.

"The deal has been extinguished," Telefonica said.

Though PT shareholders voted two weeks ago to accept the offer, the Portuguese government used special voting rights to block the sale, citing national interests.

The European Union's Court

of Justice then ruled that the Portuguese government's blocking of the deal was illegal.

Telefonica and PT each own 50 percent of Brasilcel, a Dutch holding company which owns 60 percent of Vivo. The Spanish company's offer was to buy PT's half of Brasilcel and following the court's finding it extended the offer until July 16.

Telefonica is eager to expand its significant presence in the fast-growing Latin American sector, where it has an important foothold in burgeoning markets such as Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela and Brazil.

Brazil's economy is booming, in contrast to Telefonica's home territory of Spain which is struggling to emerge from nearly two years of recession.

PT is Portugal's largest telecommunications operator and the Portuguese government demanded it maintain a foothold in Brazil as it did not want to lose PT's Brazilian revenue stream.

Telefonica SA is a much larger company than Portugal Telecom SGPS SA, employing about 237,000 people compared with the around 32,000 employees at its Portuguese counterpart.

Telefonica would not comment Saturday on the possibility of legal action following the collapse of the deal.

Calls to Portugal Telecom on Saturday went unanswered. Telefonica shares fell 1.55 percent to euro16.16 on Friday while Portugal Telecom directors were still considering the deal. Portugal Telecom shares slid 4.53 percent to euro8.08 per share. □

RIM says Apple claims about BlackBerry unacceptable

TORONTO (Reuters)

— Apple Inc appears to be deliberately distorting the issues surrounding the iPhone 4's antenna design by asserting that Research In Motion's BlackBerry has similar reception problems, RIM said.

"Apple's attempt to draw RIM into Apple's self-made debacle is unacceptable," RIM co-Chief Executives Mike Lazaridis and Jim Balsillie said in a statement emailed late Friday.

"Apple's claims about RIM products appear to be deliberate attempts to distort the public's understanding of an antenna design issue and to deflect attention from Apple's difficult situation."

Since the June 24 launch of the iPhone 4, some users have reported drastically reduced signal strength when they held the touch-screen phone a certain way, leading to dropped calls.

In response to the complaints Apple Chief Executive Steve Jobs said Friday the entire smartphone industry shared

such reception problems, naming specifically Research in Motion, Samsung Electronics and HTC Corp.

At a rare, 90-minute press conference, Jobs maintained there were no problems with the iPhone 4's wraparound antenna design and accused the media of trying to "tear down" a company that had grown so successful.

"This is life in the smartphone world. Phones aren't perfect. Most every smartphone we tested behaved like this," Jobs said.

In response of Jobs' comments, RIM's co-chief executives issued a statement defending the BlackBerry's design and criticizing Apple's approach to dealing with the iPhone 4's antenna issue.

"RIM has avoided designs like the one Apple used in the iPhone 4 and instead has used innovative designs which reduce the risk for dropped calls, especially in areas of lower coverage," they said.

"One thing is for certain, RIM's customers don't need to use a case for their BlackBerry smartphone to maintain proper connectivity," the statement said.

RIM, based in Waterloo, Ontario, was referring to Jobs' offer to provide iPhone 4 users with free phone cases to address the reception complaints.

Apple, based in Cupertino, California, could not be reached immediately to comment. □

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Robert Gibbs: There Are Enough Close Races For GOP To Take The House

Sam Stein

White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs acknowledged on Sunday that there were enough closely contested congressional races that the Democrats could potentially lose their majority in the House of Representatives in the fall.

But in an appearance on NBC's "Meet The Press," Gibbs also insisted that the party had a compelling case to make to voters that might help them hold onto power come Election Day.

"I think there is no doubt that there are a lot of seats that will be up, a lot of contested seats," Gibbs said. "I think people are going to have a choice to make in the fall. There's no doubt there are enough seats in play that could cause Republicans to gain control -- there is no doubt about that. This will depend on strong campaigns by Democrats."

He continued: "I think we've got to take the issues to them. Do you want to put into the speakership of the House a guy who thinks that the financial calamity is tantamount to an ant? The guy who is the ranking member of the energy and commerce committee, Joe Barton started his congressional testimony of the CEO of BP by apologizing not to the people in the Gulf but to the CEO. I think that is a perfect window not into what people are thinking but the way they will govern. Joe Barton, John Boehner those are the types of things you will hear a lot both from the president and from local candidates."

The comments were part of a broader case the administration made Sunday morning in defense of their record. In addition to Gibbs, senior adviser David Axelrod was also dispatched to the Sunday show circuit where he was peppered with questions about why the party and the president were struggling to win over independent voters.

"Well look," Axelrod said on CNN's "State of the Union,"

"I think I may have said this to you before, but in December of 2008, when we sat down with our economic advisers, and they told us what the country was in the midst of, and what the next couple of years were likely to hold, I said to the president: 'Look, your numbers are not going to be nearly as good a year from now.' We would have had a tough election in any case in 2010. This will make that election a little tougher. So this is not a big surprise." □

History's turning points often goes unnoticed

By David M. Shribman

Franklin Roosevelt didn't want to fight the Vietnam War. He wasn't, of course, alive when American troops began to trickle into Indochina, and his grasp of the tensions with Soviet Russia that would mature into the Cold War was not fully formed. Indeed, toward the end of World War II, he cut out Winston Churchill so as to confer with Joseph Stalin privately.

But from July 1944 through the early months of 1945, Roosevelt repeatedly set out a clear vision for Vietnam: It should be a trusteeship, governed by the new United Nations, and not a colony, governed by France. "Roosevelt has been more outspoken to me on that subject than any other colonial matter," Churchill told his foreign secretary, Anthony Eden, "and I imagine it is one of his principal war aims to liberate Indochina from France."

Then Roosevelt died. His ideas for Vietnam died with him, and before long his successor, Harry S. Truman, accepted French possession of Indochina. The rest is (very sad) history, set out in a stunning new book on Dien Bien Phu, the French outpost that collapsed in 1954, by Ted Morgan, whose account of FDR's abandoned notion has the whiff of tragedy.

Roosevelt's death was a turning point in American politics, the conduct of World War II, the character of the presidency, the profile of the Democratic Party and relations among the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union and France. All that was known, or could have been surmised, on April 12, 1945, the day he died.

But the implications for Vietnam were not known and could not have been imagined the evening Truman took the presidential oath of office. It is possible to argue that the death warrants of several million Vietnamese and 58,000 Americans, some yet unborn, were signed along with the death certificate of President Roosevelt.

History is full of turning points, some instantly recognizable. Almost everybody understood on the day that Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria was assassinated in Sarajevo in 1914 that the world would be different in the years ahead, and that Central Europe would be transformed. So, too, with the German invasion of Poland in 1939 and the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor 27 months later, both instantly acknowledged as turning points for power politics in Europe and Asia.

But some turning points occur far from view or, if they are prominent events, have unexpected implications. Everyone knows that the election of Barack Obama was an important event. No one knows whether that will inspire a young black person, or someone else, somewhere in America or Africa or somewhere else, to dream big and make history.

At the same time, we are surrounded by the effects of turning points that are spectacularly misinterpreted. Who could have imagined that Barry Goldwater's loss in 1964 would be regarded today as boosting American conservatives' prospects rather than burying them? (This is received wisdom today, especially since Ronald Reagan's pre-election speech for Goldwater launched the career that would transform

conservatism -- and the American political scene.)

Who could have imagined that the Nazis' use of anti-communist elements of Muslim enclaves to fight the Soviets would have led to the West's use of the same groups in the Cold War, which in turn would have led to American support of the mujahedeen in Afghanistan in the 1980s, which then would have led to the establishment of an al-Qaida base in Central Asia, which would have led to the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001? (That is the thesis of Ian Johnson's new book, "A Mosque in Munich.")

Then again, who could have imagined that Theodore Roosevelt's embrace of a Monroe Doctrine for Asia would have encouraged Japan to seek a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere that would in turn lead to Pearl Harbor and then to the Cold War? (That is the less-convincing thesis of James Bradley's "The Imperial Cruise," published late last year and still selling briskly.) Perhaps the most intriguing turning points are the ones that go unrecognized for many years. Here's one: The day in May 1917 when Harry Truman, at age 33, rejoined the Missouri National Guard with the intention of fighting in World War I. That experience gave the 33rd president, the last chief executive without a college degree, the worldly perspective to guide the United States at the end of World War II and the beginning of the Cold War. Some are apocryphal or hard to prove. For years Americans believed, wrongly, that Fidel Castro had been cut by a professional baseball team, an event that denied him the chance to be a Yankee or a Senator -- consider the symbolism of that - and set him on the path to revolution, shaping the destiny of the Kennedy administration, which stumbled at the Bay of Pigs and triumphed during the Cuban Missile Crisis a year later.

Is it possible that Ho Chi Minh's experience as a messboy on a French ocean liner turned him against his colonial masters, or that his failure to attract support for Vietnamese independence at the Versailles peace conference pushed him toward Moscow, a fateful drift with a significance for Vietnam and the United States at least as important as the death of Roosevelt?

There is, however, one turning point that went unnoticed at the time and whose importance is undeniable today.

In April 1969, Steve Crocker, one year out of UCLA, wrote a "request for comment" that received no attention in a week that included the decision to "Vietnamize" the conflict in Indochina, the cancellation of "The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour" and the Chicago Eight's plea of not guilty in a trial involving demonstrations at the Democratic National Convention a year earlier. Crocker's document included this passage:

"After receiving a message from a HOST, an IMP partitions the message into one or more packets. Packets are not more than 1010 bits long and are the unit of data transmission from IMP to IMP. A 24-bit cyclic checksum is computed by the transmission hardware and is appended to an outgoing packet. The checksum is recomputed by the receiving hardware and is checked against the transmitted checksum. Packets are reassembled into messages at the destination IMP." □

Ingrid Betancourt también renuncia a indemnización propuesta por Francia

PARÍS (AFP) - La ex rehén de la guerrilla de las FARC Ingrid Betancourt renunció a una indemnización propuesta por Francia por sus seis años de cautiverio, tras retirar el pasado martes una solicitud de reparación por su secuestro en Colombia, informó el sábado su servicio de prensa.

Ingrid Betancourt “renunció a la oferta del Fondo de Garantías para las Víctimas y agradeció al Estado francés haber reconocido generosamente su derecho a reparación”, informó el servicio de comunicación de la ex rehén en un comunicado.

“Tras renunciar a una solicitud de indemnización en Colombia, Ingrid Betancourt quiere hacer lo propio con Francia, que la apoyó fuertemente durante los seis años de su secuestro y desde su liberación”, añadió la nota.

La ex rehén de la guerrilla de las FARC Ingrid Betancourt, blanco de críticas por su aspiración a recibir una indemnización del Estado colombiano

de unos 8 millones de dólares por su secuestro, retiró el martes esa solicitud.

El trámite de retiro de la solicitud -que Betancourt y su familia formalizaron el pasado 30 de junio-, fue hecho por su abogado Gabriel Devis, quien “manifestó que desiste de las acciones administrativas que promovió”, señaló la Procuraduría.

La institución precisó que las peticiones de Ingrid Betancourt, su hermana Astrid, su madre Yolanda Pulecio, y sus hijos Melanie y Lorenzo Delloye eran superiores a los 15.000 millones de pesos (cerca de 8 millones de dólares), un monto mayor al que se había informado inicialmente.

De ese monto, la política pedía 5.831 millones de pesos (unos 3 millones de dólares) para ella por los ingresos que dejó de recibir durante los 3.320 días de cautiverio, y 9.600 millones para su familia (unos 5,1 millones de dólares) por los “daños morales y perjuicios” que padeció a causa de su secuestro □



Ingrid Betancourt “renunció a la oferta del Fondo de Garantías para las Víctimas y agradeció al Estado francés haber reconocido generosamente su derecho a reparación”,

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Monthly Newsletter

J U L Y 2 0 1 0 A r u b a



Glenn Monie's journey to becoming a regular performer at many of the most popular piano bars in his native UK and all across Europe took a long and circuitous route.

Glenn started playing the guitar when he was just seven years old and began his career as a guitarist and vocalist at the age of 15. After playing with various bands, traveling around Europe and the Caribbean, and covering some of the most popular soul, blues, rock and country hits of the 1960s and 1970s, Glenn decided to go solo in 1981. Completely self-taught on guitar, he taught himself to play chords on piano to back up his vocals. After years of hard work in the English pubs and clubs, he eventually honed his piano playing ability to the point when he began performing in some of Europe's most popular piano bars.

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